

February 27, 2009

The Honorable Gregory Craig
Counsel to the President
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Craig:

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is continuing its longstanding oversight of implementation of the Presidential Records Act (PRA) and White House policies on the preservation of e-mail records. As you know, e-mail preservation and retention has been a challenge in previous Administrations.

During the past two years, the Committee has monitored the implementation of improved information technology systems by the White House Office of Administration that are designed to better capture and preserve official presidential records. Accordingly, the Committee is requesting updated information on how such systems were implemented in the closing months of the previous Administration and their status at the beginning of the new Administration. I ask that you respond to the following questions:

1. Last year at significant taxpayer expense the White House Chief Information Officer acquired an electronic archiving technology. As I understand it, the migration to this technology was ongoing during the last quarter of 2008. What is the status of the installation and migration to this new archiving system?

2. In 2008 National Archives General Counsel Gary Stern requested that the White House Counsel's office employ a lawyer full time to solely handle issues relating to the PRA. Do you foresee assigning the National Archives and PRA portfolio to one associate White House counsel on a full-time basis?

3.What policies and procedures are in place to ensure that official e-mails subject to the Presidential Records Act are captured and preserved by government information technology systems?

4. What procedure exists for ensuring that all messages sent or received by White House staff on private, non-governmental e-mail accounts are properly categorized as presidential records or non-presidential records? What review process has been instituted to ensure that each e-mail is accurately categorized pursuant to law?

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. I look forward to working together on these issues.

Sincerely,

Edolphus Towns
Chairman

cc:The Honorable Darrell Issa
Ranking Minority Member

Documents and Links

- [Letter to White House Counsel Greg Craig](#)